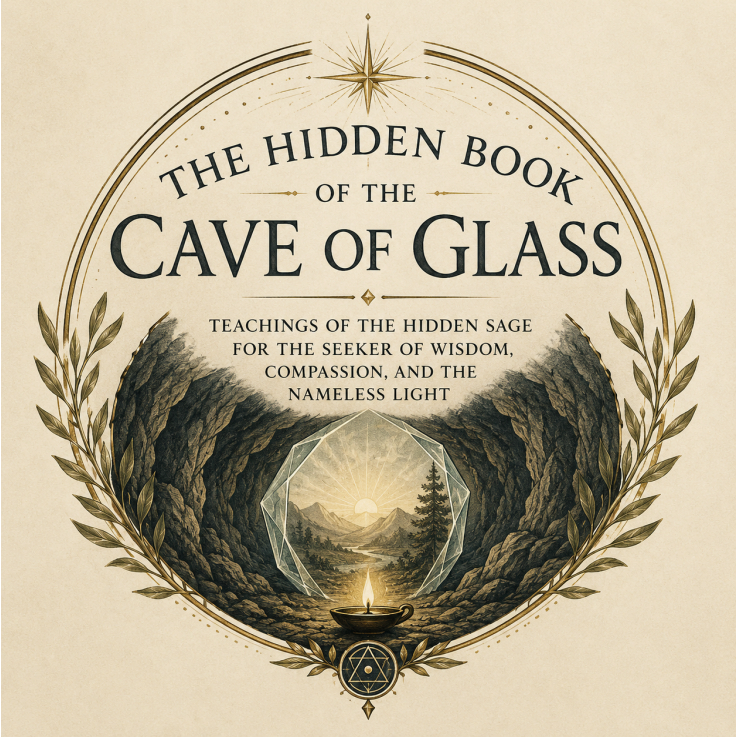
The Hidden Book of the Cave of Glass

Being the Secret Revelations of an Unknown Gnostic Alchemist, Written in the Tongue of the Ancient Fathers



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Reverend Moshe Reed, Servant and Prophet of Logos

Dedication

Unto them that seek Wisdom above Riches, and Truth above the Praise of Men; unto the Solitary, the Watchful, and the Lovers of the Hidden Light; unto all that have departed from the Noise of the World, yet have not departed from Charity: this little Book is humbly dedicated.

May the Nameless One guide thy Steps unto the Secret Peace which neither Time nor Death can overthrow.

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The Hidden Book of the Cave of Glass *is an original mystical wisdom text that follows an anonymous hermit-sage's teachings on silence, humility, compassion, and inner transformation, guiding readers on a symbolic pilgrimage toward the ineffable* ***Nameless Light*** *through the "Great Work" of the soul.*

Preface

Concerning the Discovery of the Hidden Manuscript

These are the words of him whose name hath been forgotten among men.

Neither king nor priest was he, neither prince nor governor; but a solitary man dwelling in a cave among the barren rocks, where no trumpet of war was heard, neither the clamour of the marketplace.

He fled not because he hated mankind, but because he loved Wisdom more than the applause of fools.

For he beheld that many sought power, yet few sought understanding.

Many delighted in the treasures of the earth, yet neglected the treasure that neither moth nor rust consumeth.

Many adorned the body, yet suffered the soul to remain unclothed.

Therefore he departed into the wilderness.

There he kindled no great fire, save only a little lamp, that he might read by night the writings of the wise men of old.

He drank of the spring.

He brake bread in silence.

He watched the courses of the stars.

He observed the growing of herbs and the changing of the seasons.

He laboured daily in the furnace of the alchemist, not only upon metals, but upon his own heart.

For he declared:

"He that changeth lead into gold hath accomplished but a small thing: but he that changeth pride into humility hath discovered the greater alchemy."

Many years passed over him as the shadow passeth over the mountain.

His beard became white as winter wool.

His hands were hardened by labour.

His speech became few.

Yet his understanding increased.

When certain shepherds found his dwelling after his departure from this life, they discovered a chest of cedar sealed with wax.

Within were scrolls written in faded ink.

No name was written therein.

Only these words stood upon the first leaf:

"Hide not this Book from the humble: but cast it not before the proud; for every vessel receiveth only that which it is prepared to contain."

Thus begin the sayings of the Hidden Sage.

Book I — Of the Corruption of the World

Chapter I — Of the Kingdom of Blindness

And it came to pass in the days of my pilgrimage, that I departed from among the cities of men, and made my habitation in a cave of stone, hard by a spring that failed not in the time of drought.

For mine eyes had beheld many things grievous to the spirit.

I saw the mighty oppress the weak, and call it justice.

I saw merchants sell vanity, and the people purchased it with gladness.

I saw rulers promise peace, whilst preparing the sword.

I saw teachers magnify themselves, yet knew not themselves.

And I said within mine heart, Surely there is a mist spread over the minds of men.

For they behold the shadow, and call it the substance.

They pursue the wind, saying, Lo, here is treasure; yet when they have laid hold upon it, behold, their hands are empty.

They build houses of stone, yet neglect the house of the inward man.

They number their silver, but weigh not their thoughts.

They adorn the flesh, but leave the spirit unclothed.

Therefore I withdrew myself from their assemblies, not because every man was evil, but because the multitude loved noise more than silence, and appearance more than truth.

And as I abode alone, a voice arose not from without, but from the stillness of the inward chamber, saying,

"He that seeketh Wisdom must first become a stranger unto the praises of the world."

Then I considered these words many days.

For the world rewardeth him that conquereth another; but Wisdom rewardeth him that conquereth himself.

The kingdoms of men are established by fear, by desire, and by contention.

But the Kingdom of the Hidden Light is entered by humility, by patience, and by the relinquishing of vain glory.

Know therefore, O seeker, that blindness is not the want of eyes, but the refusal to behold.

Many possess learning, yet remain fools.

Many speak continually, yet understand little.

Many judge others, yet have never judged their own hearts.

These are they that wander though they stand still.

These are they that sleep though their eyes be opened.

Yet condemn them not utterly.

For I also was numbered among them.

I also sought honour.

I also delighted in praise.

I also imagined that much speaking was wisdom.

Until the furnace of affliction consumed my pride as stubble before the flame.

Then did I perceive that every outward fire is but a likeness of the inward fire.

For the true alchemist laboreth first upon his own soul.

He melteth pride into meekness.

He refineth anger into compassion.

He changeth fear into steadfastness.

He separateth truth from falsehood, as gold is separated from dross.

This is the first operation of the Hidden Art.

Whoso seeketh another beginning hath not yet begun.

Therefore enter thou first into the furnace of thine own heart.

Fear not the heat thereof.

For no gold hath ever shone which first endured not the fire.

And the Light, which no darkness can overcome, revealeth itself not unto the proud, but unto the patient, the watchful, and the humble of spirit.

Here endeth the first instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter II — How Men Became Servants unto the Powers

Hearken now, O seeker, and incline thine ear unto the hidden saying.

For no man is born bearing chains upon his hands, neither is any child brought forth with fetters upon his feet.

Yet many pass all the days of their life in bondage, and perceive not their captivity.

For the chains of iron are lighter than the chains of ignorance.

The prison of stone may be escaped.

But the prison of the mind is carried whithersoever a man goeth.

I inquired of the Silence, saying, "Whence cometh this bondage?"

And there was no thunder.

Neither was there a voice in the wind.

But understanding arose softly within me, as the dawn creepeth over the mountains.

Then perceived I that the Powers prevail not first by force, but by consent.

For they sow fear where courage should dwell.

They sow envy where gratitude should flourish.

They sow pride where humility should blossom.

They sow endless desire where contentment would have sufficed.

Thus do they build their kingdom, not only in palaces, but within the secret chambers of the heart.

For what availeth it to cast down a tyrant, if the seed of tyranny remaineth alive within the soul?

Another shall arise.

And after him another.

For the root hath not been plucked up.

Therefore strive not first against the shadow, but against the root from which the shadow groweth.

The foolish man curseth the darkness.

The wise man seeketh the lamp.

Know also this mystery.

The Powers delight in distraction.

They rejoice when the mind runneth continually after rumours, pleasures, quarrels, and vain imaginings.

For a troubled heart cannot behold the Hidden Light, even as disturbed waters cannot clearly reflect the heavens.

Therefore did I make silence my companion.

I restrained my tongue.

I measured my words.

I departed from needless disputations.

For every idle contention addeth another stone unto the prison wall.

Yet mistake not silence for fear.

For there is a silence born of cowardice, and there is a silence born of wisdom.

The first hideth truth.

The second preserveth it until the appointed season.

As the seed sleepeth beneath the earth until the spring rain awaken it, so also doth wisdom wait for the prepared heart.

Cast not pearls before mockery.

Neither strive to awaken him that delighteth in his dreams.

For every soul hath its season.

The husbandman reapeth not in winter.

Neither doth the physician compel healing upon him that refuseth the remedy.

Be thou therefore patient.

Purify first thine own vessel.

Cleanse first thine own sight.

Tend first the hidden fire within thee.

Then shalt thou become as a lamp set upon a hill, needing neither trumpet nor proclamation.

For the Light declareth itself.

It hath no need of boasting.

And he that hath become servant unto the Light cannot again become servant unto the Powers, save only by forgetting the way.

Remember therefore the furnace.

Remember the silence.

Remember the spring in the wilderness.

For these three shall preserve thy soul when the kingdoms of men are shaken, and when every proud tower is brought low.

Here endeth the second instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter III — Of the Sleep That Walketh

And I lifted up mine eyes from the mouth of the cave, and beheld the valleys beneath me.

The cities were full of movement.

The highways were filled with travellers.

The markets were filled with buyers and sellers.

The temples were filled with voices.

Yet the Spirit whispered within me, saying,

"They walk, yet many sleep."

Then was I astonished, and I answered,

"Lord of the Hidden Light, how can this thing be? For their eyes are open, and their ears hear the sound of the world."

And the inward voice answered,

"The body awaketh with the morning, yet the soul awakeneth only unto Truth."

Then understood I that there is a sleep deeper than the sleep of the night.

For the sleeper of the night shall awaken with the rising of the sun.

But he that sleepeth in ignorance may dream through all the years of his life.

His hands labour.

His lips speak.

His feet journey.

Yet his heart remaineth a stranger unto itself.

For he inquireth diligently concerning the affairs of other men, yet asketh not, "Who am I that inquire?"

He measureth the stars, yet measureth not his own desires.

He seeketh hidden treasures beneath the earth, yet neglecteth the treasure buried within his own soul.

He feareth death daily, because he hath never truly examined life.

Therefore are the multitudes carried about as leaves before the autumn wind.

One voice calleth, and they follow.

Another voice crieth aloud, and they turn aside.

Every new fashion becometh unto them as a new commandment.

Every loud proclamation seemeth unto them as wisdom.

They weigh not the matter.

They examine not the spirit.

They discern not the fruit.

For the sleeping man dreameth that every shadow is substance.

But the awakened man trieth all things before he embraceth them.

Be not therefore hasty in believing.

Neither be hasty in denying.

Hold thy judgment until silence hath weighed the matter.

For many errors are born from swiftness of speech.

And many sorrows from certainty before understanding.

I have seen a fool who rejoiced in his ignorance.

I have seen a learned man who rejoiced in his knowledge.

Yet both were equally distant from Wisdom.

For the one loved darkness.

The other loved himself.

Wisdom dwelleth with neither.

She abideth with the humble, who confess, "Mine understanding is small, yet I shall continue to seek."

This is the lamp that never faileth.

To remain teachable.

To remain watchful.

To remain gentle though surrounded by harshness.

To remain humble though praised by many.

These are the signs of the awakened soul.

Seek not therefore to awaken every sleeper.

For no man can compel another unto sight.

The dawn ariseth in its appointed hour.

The flower openeth not because another commandeth it.

Even so the soul awakeneth when it hath grown weary of its own dreams.

Therefore pray for all.

Despise none.

Speak truth with meekness.

Walk quietly.

And let thy life become a testimony stronger than many words.

For the Hidden Light shineth continually.

It is not the Light that is absent.

It is the eyes of many that remain closed.

Here endeth the third instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter IV — Why the Wise Departed into the Wilderness

And there arose among the disciples a question, saying,

"Master, wherefore did the wise men of old forsake the cities, and dwell in caves, deserts, mountains, and solitary places? Were they angry with the children of men?"

And I answered them, saying,

Nay.

The physician hateth not the sick.

Neither doth the shepherd hate the wandering sheep.

Even so the lovers of Wisdom departed not because they despised mankind, but because they sought first to heal the sickness within themselves.

For how shall he guide another through the darkness, who himself hath never beheld the morning?

How shall he quench another man's fire, whilst his own house burneth?

Therefore they fled from the tumult, that they might hear the whisper.

They departed from the multitude, that they might discover the One.

They emptied their hands, that they might receive what cannot be purchased.

I also dwelt among men in former days.

I sat in the halls of learning.

I disputed with philosophers.

I conversed with rulers.

I walked among merchants and craftsmen.

Yet I found that every place was filled with haste.

Each man desired to be heard.

Few desired to hear.

Each sought to teach.

Few sought to understand.

Then perceived I that the soul groweth as a tender vine.

If it be planted in perpetual noise, it beareth little fruit.

But if it be rooted in stillness, watered by contemplation, and warmed by patience, it bringeth forth wisdom in due season.

Think not that the wilderness is only a place of sand and stone.

Many dwell in deserts while surrounded by crowds.

Many dwell in crowds while possessing the peace of the desert.

The true wilderness is the place where every false voice is silenced.

There the soul meeteth itself without disguise.

There excuses perish.

There pride hungereth.

There ambition findeth no throne.

There the hidden wounds of the heart are revealed, not that they should condemn thee, but that they might be healed.

For the Great Alchemist worketh first in secret.

The furnace is shut.

The vessel is sealed.

The fire burneth unseen.

Even so doth Wisdom transform the inward man where no eye beholdeth.

Seek not therefore the admiration of those who praise holy appearances.

The fairest robe may cover a diseased heart.

The roughest garment may clothe a soul filled with light.

Judge not by the garment.

Judge not by the cave.

Judge not by the silence.

For many hide in caves because they fear men.

Others dwell there because they love God and truth more than applause.

Discern the fruit.

The tree is known not by its bark, but by that which it bringeth forth.

If thy solitude breed bitterness, return and examine thy heart.

If thy solitude breed humility, compassion, patience, and peace, then know that the Hidden Fire burneth rightly.

At length the disciple asked,

"Master, shall every seeker depart into the wilderness?"

And I answered,

"Nay. Some are called unto the mountain, and others unto the marketplace. Yet every soul must build within itself a secret cave, wherein no voice entereth save the voice of Wisdom. Blessed is he that keepeth this sanctuary undefiled, though he dwell in the midst of ten thousand."

Thus ended the discourse.

Here endeth the fourth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Book II — Of the Hidden Fire

Chapter V — The Furnace of the Soul

And it came to pass, after many years had gone over me in the wilderness, that a certain young man climbed unto my cave, his garments being torn with travel, and his countenance bearing the marks of much sorrow.

And when he had saluted me, he said,

"Master, I have journeyed far to learn the mystery of alchemy. Men have spoken of thee, saying that thou knowest the hidden operations whereby lead is turned into gold."

Then I looked upon him for a season and answered not.

At the last I arose, and brought him unto the furnace that stood in the innermost chamber of the cave.

There were crucibles of clay.

There were vessels of glass.

There were herbs hanging from the beams.

There were minerals gathered from the mountains.

And the fire burned softly beneath the vessel.

Then said the young man,

"Surely now wilt thou reveal unto me the Secret Art."

But I answered,

"If thy desire be only for yellow metal, thy journey hath been in vain."

He marvelled greatly.

And I took a piece of common lead into my hand and said,

"This metal is heavy, cold, and dull; yet there is another lead far heavier than this."

The young man asked,

"What lead is heavier than lead?"

And I answered,

"Pride."

Again I took black sulphur into my hand.

"This also hath its likeness."

"What likeness?" said he.

I answered,

"Unbridled anger."

Then I showed him salt.

And I said,

"This preserveth that which is good."

"What is its mystery?" he asked.

And I answered,

"Discernment."

Then I poured clear water into the vessel.

"This is humility, which cleanseth every vessel willing to receive it."

Then kindled I the fire.

"This is affliction, without which no purification is accomplished."

The young man watched all these things with great attention.

Yet I perceived that his heart remained fixed upon earthly gold.

Therefore I said unto him,

"Suppose that I should give thee a mountain of treasure, and thy soul remain proud, fearful, and full of envy. Art thou become rich?"

He answered,

"Nay, master."

Again I said,

"Suppose thy purse be empty, yet thy heart be at peace, thy conscience clean, thy mind free from hatred, and thy spirit steadfast amid adversity. Art thou poor?"

Long was he silent.

At length he bowed his head.

Then I knew that the first stone of the furnace had been laid.

For the true work beginneth when a man ceaseth to ask, 'How may I possess more?' and beginneth to ask, 'How may I become whole?'

Know therefore, O seeker, that every furnace fashioned by the hands of men is but an image of another furnace hidden within the soul.

The flames of disappointment consume pride.

The coals of suffering consume vanity.

The heat of patience separateth truth from illusion.

The smoke ascendeth, carrying away that which cannot endure the fire.

Only that which is pure remaineth.

Therefore despise not thy trials.

Curse not every hardship.

For many pray for wisdom, yet flee from the very furnace wherein wisdom is forged.

The ore complaineth because of the fire.

The gold rejoiceth because of the purification.

Choose therefore which thou wilt become.

And remember this saying above all others:

The greatest alchemist is not he who changeth metals, but he who is himself transformed.

Here endeth the fifth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter VI — Of the Secret Alchemy Which Turneth Lead into Gold

And the young man remained with me many days.

He gathered wood for the fire.

He fetched water from the spring.

He swept the dust from the floor of the cave.

Yet concerning the mysteries of alchemy I spake little.

At length he became impatient, saying,

"Master, thou hast taught me humility, silence, and patience; but where is the hidden knowledge that kings have sought and princes have desired to possess?"

Then I smiled, and placed before him two vessels.

The one was of beaten gold, bright before the eye.

The other was of rough clay, fashioned without beauty.

I filled the vessel of gold with bitter water.

The vessel of clay I filled with clear water from the spring.

Then I said,

"Drink."

He reached first toward the golden vessel.

But I restrained his hand.

"Nay. Taste first."

He drank.

And immediately his face was troubled because of the bitterness.

Then he drank from the vessel of clay.

And the water refreshed him greatly.

Then said I,

"What hast thou learned?"

He answered,

"That appearance deceiveth."

I replied,

"This is the first gate."

Again I set before him two stones.

The one sparkled in the light.

The other was black and uncomely.

I cast them both into the furnace.

The bright stone was consumed and became ashes.

The black stone endured the fire and revealed veins of silver hidden within.

Then said I,

"What hast thou learned?"

He answered,

"That the fire revealeth what the eye cannot."

I said,

"This is the second gate."

Then opened I the scroll of the ancient masters, wherein were written many signs, circles, dragons, eagles, suns, moons, and hidden emblems.

The young man gazed upon them long.

Yet he understood them not.

Then asked he,

"Master, what mean these secret figures?"

And I answered,

"They are a veil."

He marvelled.

"A veil?"

Yea, said I.

"For every generation desireth secret knowledge before it hath obtained a humble heart.

Therefore the wise clothed wisdom in symbols, lest fools should mistake words for understanding."

The dragon signifieth the untamed passions.

The eagle signifieth the soul that ascendeth above earthly desire.

The king representeth the ruling mind.

The queen representeth wisdom.

The sun betokeneth illumination.

The moon betokeneth reflection.

The marriage of the king and queen is the reconciliation of understanding and compassion.

The philosopher's stone is not found by wandering over mountains.

It is fashioned within the furnace of the heart.

Then perceived the young man that the greatest mysteries had been hidden in plain sight.

For every mountain proclaimed them.

Every river declared them.

Every seed testified of them.

Yet men sought distant kingdoms while neglecting the kingdom nearest unto them.

Then said I unto him,

"The alchemist observeth Nature because Nature concealeth nothing.

Only the heart of man delighteth in disguise."

The oak seeketh not to become the cedar.

The river envieth not the sea.

The stars contend not one against another.

Only man imagineth himself poor because another prospereth.

Only man seeketh greatness by diminishing his neighbour.

Therefore hath the inward metal become corrupt.

Its brightness hath been darkened.

Its harmony hath been divided.

Its simplicity hath been forgotten.

The labour of the Hidden Art is to restore what was obscured, not to invent what never existed.

For the gold sleepeth already within the ore.

The sculptor revealeth the image by removing the stone that hideth it.

Even so doth Wisdom uncover the light already planted within the soul.

Seek not therefore strange miracles.

Become thyself the miracle.

For the greatest transmutation is not wrought in crucibles of earth, but in the secret places of the spirit.

Here endeth the sixth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter VII — The Salt, the Sulphur, and the Living Spirit

And when the seasons had passed, and the snows upon the mountains had melted into the valleys, the young man said unto me,

"Master, thou hast spoken unto me of the furnace, and of the hidden gold. Yet the ancient books declare continually of Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury. Declare now unto thy servant the mystery thereof."

And I answered him, saying,

"Many have stumbled over these names, supposing them to be only the substances found within the vessels of the alchemist. But the wise discern that every visible thing pointeth unto an invisible mystery."

Then I took a handful of salt and placed it upon the palm of my hand.

"Behold the Salt."

"It preserveth that which would otherwise decay."

"It giveth savour unto that which is without taste."

"It endureth where many things perish."

"So also within the soul there must be a preserving principle."

"This I call Discernment."

"For without discernment, knowledge corrupteth into pride, zeal into cruelty, and freedom into confusion."

Then I kindled a little sulphur in the flame.

It burned swiftly, and its smoke ascended toward the roof of the cave.

"Behold the Sulphur."

"It burneth with great fervency."

"So also there is within every man a fire."

"The foolish are consumed by it."

"The wise govern it."

"This fire is Desire."

"When desire serveth vanity, it becometh destruction."

"When desire serveth Wisdom, it becometh holy zeal."

Then I brought forth a vessel of clear water gathered from the spring.

The disciple said,

"But master, where is Mercury?"

I smiled and answered,

"The ignorant seek only quicksilver."

"The wise seek the Living Spirit."

For as water floweth continually, taking the shape of every vessel, yet remaining itself, even so must the awakened soul become.

Soft without weakness.

Gentle without fear.

Yielding without surrendering truth.

For that which is rigid is soon broken.

But that which is living adapteth and endureth.

Then said the young man,

"Can these three be divided?"

I answered,

"They may be named apart, yet in the perfected work they are united."

Discernment without holy desire groweth cold.

Holy desire without discernment becometh fanaticism.

Neither accomplisheth the Work unless guided by the Living Spirit.

Then opened I a scroll of the ancients, wherein was written,

"As above, so below."

And I said,

"Many repeat these words, yet few understand them."

"For as the furnace refineth metal, so adversity refineth character."

"As rivers wear away stone, so patience overcometh pride."

"As the hidden seed breaketh the earth in silence, so Wisdom ariseth quietly within the soul."

"The whole creation preacheth continually unto him that hath ears to hear."

Then the disciple sat in silence until the going down of the sun.

At length he said,

"Master, every creature hath become a teacher."

And I rejoiced greatly.

For I knew that the Book of Nature had begun to open before him.

Therefore I said,

"Read not only the writings of men."

"Read the mountain."

"Read the river."

"Read the tree."

"Read the stars."

"For the Nameless One hath inscribed many lessons upon the face of creation, and they are hidden only from the hurried eye."

Thus the evening fell upon the wilderness.

The fire burned low.

The spring continued its song.

And no further words were spoken.

For silence itself had become the teacher.

Here endeth the seventh instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter VIII — Of the Stone Which No Hand Hath Fashioned

And upon the seventh day, when the heavens were covered with clouds, and a great stillness rested upon the mountains, the disciple came unto me, bearing in his hand a stone of exceeding beauty, clear as crystal, and glistening in the morning light.

And he said,

"Master, behold what I have found among the rocks. Is not this the Stone whereof the ancient philosophers wrote?"

I took the stone, and turned it in mine hand.

Then laid I it again upon the earth.

And I answered,

"Nay, my son. Though it be fair to look upon, it remaineth but a stone."

The disciple wondered greatly.

"For have not the wise sought the Philosopher's Stone throughout all generations?"

I said,

"They have indeed sought it."

"But many have sought it in the mountains who never sought it within themselves."

Then I led him unto the mouth of the cave, where the rain had begun to fall softly upon the earth.

I pointed unto the drops that descended from the heavens.

"Tell me, who commandeth the rain?"

He answered,

"The Nameless One alone."

"And who fashioned the mountain?"

"The Nameless One."

"And who taught the seed to become the cedar, and the eagle to seek the heights?"

"The Nameless One."

Then said I,

"Every created thing obeyeth the law appointed unto it."

"Only man imagineth that he may become whole while remaining divided."

"The true Stone is not fashioned by hammer, nor carved by chisel, nor purchased with silver."

"It is born when the divided heart is made one."

Then I drew with my staff a circle in the dust.

Within the circle I placed three stones.

One white.

One black.

One red.

The disciple looked thereon and understood not.

Then said I,

"The black stone is Ignorance."

"The white stone is Purification."

"The red stone is Living Wisdom, which cometh forth after the fire hath accomplished its work."

"These are not colours only."

"They are the journey of every soul."

"For no man receiveth wisdom before first discovering his own ignorance."

"Neither doth he attain peace before the old self is consumed in the furnace of truth."

Then the disciple said,

"Master, shall every seeker complete this work?"

And I answered,

"Nay."

"For many behold the black stone, and flee from it."

"They love pleasant illusions more than painful truth."

"Others rejoice in the white stone, yet become proud of their own purity."

"They cleanse the outside of the vessel, while the inward chamber remaineth full of vanity."

"But blessed is he that passeth through both unto the red stone."

"For he seeketh not to appear righteous."

"He desireth only to become transparent unto the Hidden Light."

Then I lifted up the crystal stone which the disciple had found.

Holding it toward the sun, I said,

"Behold."

The light passed through it unhindered.

"Thus must the soul become."

"Not admired because of itself."

"But because it hindereth not the Light."

Then we returned into the cave.

No more was spoken concerning stones.

For the disciple had begun to understand that the greatest treasures cannot be carried in the hand.

They are borne only in the heart.

And I wrote upon the wall of the cave these words:

"Become not the owner of the Stone; become the stone through which the Light shineth."

Here endeth the eighth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Book III — Of the Archons

Chapter IX — The Princes of the Air and of the Mind

And after these things, when many moons had waxed and waned, the disciple came unto me in the night season, his countenance troubled.

And he said,

"Master, as I descended into the villages to buy bread, I beheld men striving one against another without ceasing. Their tongues were as swords. Their eyes burned with envy. Their hearts were restless, though they possessed abundance. Tell me, who hath taught mankind these things?"

Then I answered him, saying,

"Hast thou not yet learned that not every chain is forged of iron?"

"There are rulers that bear crowns of gold.

And there are rulers that wear no crown, yet command the thoughts of multitudes."

The disciple said,

"Speak unto me concerning these hidden rulers."

Then I said,

"The ancients called them Archons, that is to say, Rulers."

"Whether thou understandest them as unseen powers, or as the names of the passions that rule the soul, their work is alike."

"For every ruler seeketh a throne."

"And every Archon seeketh the throne of the heart."

Then I took up seven rough stones and laid them in a circle upon the earth.

Pointing unto the first, I said,

"This is Pride, which persuadeth a man that he needeth no Wisdom save his own."

Pointing unto the second,

"This is Fear, which causeth him to surrender liberty for the promise of safety."

The third I called Greed.

"The fourth, Envy."

"The fifth, Wrath."

"The sixth, Vanity."

"And the seventh, Despair."

Then said I,

"These seven contend continually for the kingdom within man."

"When Pride reigneth, Wisdom departeth."

"When Fear reigneth, Truth is sold for comfort."

"When Greed reigneth, abundance is never enough."

"When Envy reigneth, another's blessing becometh one's own torment."

"When Wrath reigneth, judgment is blinded."

"When Vanity reigneth, appearance is loved above substance."

"When Despair reigneth, hope itself is forgotten."

The disciple looked upon the seven stones and was silent.

Then I cast them all into the fire.

Some cracked.

Some blackened.

Some endured.

Then said I,

"So likewise doth affliction reveal the secret ruler of every heart."

"For in days of peace a man knoweth little concerning himself."

"But when the furnace is heated, every hidden thing cometh forth."

Some curse.

Some steal.

Some betray.

Some become humble.

Some become steadfast.

Some discover compassion.

Therefore judge no man before the fire hath tried him.

Neither boast of thine own strength before the day of temptation.

For many imagine themselves free while the sun shineth.

Yet when darkness descendeth, they learn whose servant they have been.

Then the disciple asked,

"Master, how shall a man cast down these rulers?"

And I answered,

"He cannot cast them down by hatred."

"For hatred buildeth another throne."

"Neither by pride."

"For pride is already their eldest counsellor."

"But he overcometh them by continual watchfulness."

"Every morning examine thy thoughts."

"Every evening weigh thy deeds."

"Receive praise lightly."

"Receive correction thankfully."

"Seek little."

"Forgive quickly."

"Speak truthfully."

"And return often unto silence."

For the Archons delight in an unguarded mind, even as wolves delight in an unwatched flock.

But the soul that keepeth watch over itself is like a city whose gates are wisely tended.

Then the fire burned low.

The wind passed over the mountain.

And I perceived that the disciple no longer feared the Princes of the Air, for he had begun to discern the greater battle—the kingdom within.

Here endeth the ninth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter X — How the Invisible Chains Are Forged

And in the days that followed, the disciple watched diligently over his thoughts.

Yet he returned unto me with heaviness of spirit, saying,

"Master, though I have departed from many vanities, still I perceive within myself certain chains that I cannot behold, yet I feel their weight. Declare unto me, how are these invisible bonds forged?"

Then I answered him, saying,

"No smith hath fashioned them with hammer.

No furnace of men hath hardened them.

They are forged little by little, through every attachment that is embraced without discernment."

For every chain beginneth as a thread.

And every thread, if neglected, becometh a cord.

And many cords woven together become fetters stronger than iron.

The disciple said,

"What are these threads?"

I answered,

"The first thread is the desire to be praised."

"The second is the fear of being forgotten."

"The third is the longing to possess what sufficeth not."

"The fourth is the habit of judging before understanding."

"The fifth is the refusal to forgive."

"The sixth is the delight in continual distraction."

"And the seventh is the belief that the outward man alone is thy true self."

These are the fine cords wherewith many bind themselves, though none constrain them from without.

Then I took from the cave a length of flax.

It was soft, and easily broken.

I snapped it in twain before him.

Afterward I twisted many strands together until they became a strong rope.

Then I placed it in his hands.

He strove to break it, yet could not.

Then said I,

"So also are the habits of the soul."

"No man becometh captive in a single hour."

"He surrendereth himself by many little permissions."

"The tongue accustomed unto falsehood soon knoweth not truth."

"The eye accustomed unto envy soon beholdeth nothing with gratitude."

"The heart accustomed unto resentment forgetteth how to rejoice."

Therefore keep watch over small beginnings.

For the mountain is built of little stones.

The mighty cedar sprang from a seed no greater than the nail of thy finger.

Even so do the chains of bondage begin where no man thinketh to look.

Then the disciple asked,

"Master, if these chains be forged by little things, how shall they be broken?"

And I answered,

"By little faithfulness."

"As every chain is forged link by link, so every chain is broken link by link."

"One act of honesty weakeneth falsehood."

"One act of mercy weakeneth hatred."

"One humble confession weakeneth pride."

"One hour of silence weakeneth confusion."

"One day of contentment weakeneth greed."

Despise not therefore the small victories.

For the Hidden Light entereth often as the dawn.

It driveth away darkness not in a single instant, but little by little, until the whole earth is filled with morning.

Then I wrote these words upon a tablet of cedar:

Guard thy first thought more diligently than thy last action, for the action followeth where the thought hath long since walked.

And I delivered the tablet unto the disciple.

He placed it near his resting place, that he might behold it every morning before the rising of the sun.

Thus did he learn that liberty is preserved not by one great triumph, but by many quiet obediences unto Wisdom.

Here endeth the tenth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter XI — Of the Merchants of Vanity

And after many days there arose a great market in the valley beneath the mountain.

Men came from far countries bearing purple garments, precious stones, perfumes, books, images, curious devices, and every manner of treasure.

The disciple desired to behold these things.

And I said unto him,

"Go in peace, yet keep watch over thine heart."

So he descended from the cave unto the marketplace.

When evening had come, he returned again.

His eyes were troubled.

His spirit was weary.

Then said I,

"What hast thou seen?"

He answered,

"I saw many merchants, yet few were sellers of bread.

Many trafficked in dreams.

Many sold fear.

Many purchased honour.

Many bartered truth for applause.

And every man proclaimed his own wares to be the greatest."

Then I said,

"The market changeth little from age unto age."

"For there are merchants whose trade is not in silver, but in the desires of men."

"They sell unto the fearful the promise of safety."

"They sell unto the proud the promise of greatness."

"They sell unto the lonely the promise of belonging."

"They sell unto the restless the promise of endless novelty."

"And when one desire hath been satisfied, they awaken another."

"For vanity is a merchant whose shelves are never empty."

Then I took an empty cup and set it before the disciple.

"What seest thou?"

He answered,

"An empty vessel."

I filled it with water until it overflowed.

"What seest thou now?"

He answered,

"It can receive no more."

Then said I,

"So likewise is the soul."

"The heart that knoweth contentment cannot easily be deceived."

"But the heart that hungereth without measure shall always find another merchant."

For there are men who possess ten fields, yet desire an eleventh.

There are others praised by a thousand voices, yet grieve because one voice remaineth silent.

There are scholars who gather books as misers gather coin, yet have never learned the wisdom written upon their own hearts.

Such men are rich in possession and poor in peace.

Then the disciple asked,

"Master, is every merchant evil?"

I answered,

"Nay."

"The baker who selleth bread performeth a worthy labour."

"The potter who fashioneth vessels serveth his neighbour."

"The shepherd who selleth wool doeth honestly."

"It is not trade that corrupteth the soul."

"It is the making of gain into a god."

"When wealth becometh master, the servant forgetteth the Nameless Light."

Then I showed him a little wildflower growing from a crack in the stone beside the cave.

It neither bought nor sold.

It neither boasted nor complained.

Yet it opened itself unto the morning light.

Then said I,

"Learn from this flower."

"It seeketh only to become what it was created to be."

"It envieth not the cedar."

"It contendeth not with the rose."

"It is content to blossom where it hath been planted."

Even so should the wise man labour faithfully in that which hath been given unto him, without measuring his worth by the abundance of another.

For the merchant of vanity continually crieth,

"Thou lackest."

But Wisdom whispereth,

"Receive with gratitude, and thou shalt discover abundance."

Then the disciple understood that the richest man is not he who gathereth the most, but he whose heart requireth the least.

And the marketplace faded from his thoughts, but the little flower remained in his remembrance all the days of his life.

Here endeth the eleventh instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter XII — The Great City Which Knoweth Not Her Captivity

And it came to pass that, after many years, I descended once more from the mountain, not to dwell among men, but to behold whether the hearts of the people had turned toward Wisdom.

And when I drew near unto the Great City, I beheld walls of exceeding height, gates of brass, towers that reached toward the heavens, and streets filled with an innumerable multitude.

The people rejoiced, saying,

"Behold our greatness.

Who is like unto this city?"

Their marketplaces overflowed.

Their treasuries were full.

Their scholars multiplied.

Their craftsmen excelled.

Their musicians filled the night with melody.

Yet as I walked among them, I perceived a deep hunger hidden beneath their abundance.

Their laughter was loud, but their hearts were restless.

Their houses were many, but few had found a home.

Their knowledge increased, but wisdom was seldom sought.

Every man hastened.

Few knew whither they journeyed.

Then the inward voice said unto me,

"Behold the city that knoweth not her captivity."

I answered,

"Where are her chains? For I perceive neither prison nor fetters."

And the voice replied,

"They are woven of fear, ambition, vanity, and forgetfulness."

"For many suppose themselves free because none commandeth their feet, yet they are driven continually by appetites they have never questioned."

I observed the rulers.

Some sought justice with sincerity.

Others sought only the continuance of their own authority.

I observed the merchants.

Some dealt honestly.

Others measured every soul by profit alone.

I observed the teachers.

Some loved truth.

Others loved the sound of their own voices.

Thus I learned that no rank among men is pure merely because of its name.

The king may become a servant of Wisdom.

The beggar may become a servant of pride.

The scholar may become a fool.

The labourer may become a sage.

The chains respect neither station nor reputation.

They fasten themselves wherever vigilance sleepeth.

Then I departed unto the highest hill overlooking the city.

There I beheld thousands of lamps burning in the darkness.

Yet the stars above outshone them all.

And I said within myself,

"So also is the wisdom of men compared with the Nameless Light."

The lamps serve well within the house.

But none of them is the sun.

Therefore honour every measure of truth.

Yet mistake not the part for the whole.

For every doctrine fashioned by man is but a vessel.

Every philosophy is but a finger pointing.

Every school of wisdom is but a path through the forest.

Blessed is the traveller who remembereth that the path is not the destination.

Then the disciple said,

"Master, shall the Great City endure forever?"

And I answered,

"Nay."

"The towers shall become dust.

The marketplaces shall fall silent.

The names of rulers shall be forgotten.

The proud walls shall crumble beneath the rain.

Even the mightiest kingdoms are but travellers beneath eternity."

"But that which is built within the soul by humility, compassion, discernment, and truth cannot be consumed by moth, nor rust, nor fire."

Then we departed from the hill before the rising of the sun.

For I desired not that the city should remember my face.

It was enough that I remembered this lesson:

**He that buildeth only without shall lose his labour.

He that buildeth within carrieth his treasure wherever he goeth.**

Thus ended the discourse concerning the Great City.

Here endeth the twelfth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Book IV — Of the Solitary Way

Chapter XIII — The Cave of Silence

And after these things, the disciple said unto me,

"Master, thou hast spoken much concerning silence. Yet many suppose silence to be merely the withholding of speech. What is the Cave of Silence whereof the wise continually testify?"

Then I rose before the dawning of the day and beckoned unto him, saying,

"Follow."

And we ascended unto a place where no path was plainly seen.

The wind moved gently among the cedars.

The birds had not yet lifted up their song.

The whole creation waited in stillness.

There was a cave hidden behind the face of the mountain.

Its entrance was narrow.

Its inward chamber was deep.

No light entered therein save a single beam that fell from above.

Then said I,

"Sit."

We sat together many hours.

Neither of us spake.

The disciple grew restless.

He shifted his feet.

He sighed often.

His thoughts wandered as leaves before the wind.

At length he cried,

"Master, this silence is louder than the marketplace."

Then smiled I, saying,

"Now hast thou begun to hear."

"For while the tongue is quiet, the inward multitude continueth to speak."

"One voice remembereth old injuries."

"Another seeketh praise."

"A third imagineth tomorrow."

"A fourth rehearseth yesterday."

"And thus the soul knoweth little rest."

The disciple bowed his head.

"For I perceive a thousand voices within me."

Then answered I,

"Think not that they are thy master."

"They are but travellers passing through the country of thy mind."

"If thou pursuest every traveller, thou shalt never reach thy dwelling."

"But if thou remain steadfast, many shall pass by without entering."

Then I pointed unto the beam of light that descended into the darkness of the cave.

"Behold."

"The darkness contendeth not with the light."

"It simply vanisheth where the light is received."

"So likewise strive not continually against every wandering thought."

"Rather turn thy face toward the Hidden Light."

"For where the Light is welcomed, much darkness departeth of itself."

Then we remained until the setting of the sun.

When we departed from the cave, the disciple walked more slowly than before.

His speech was measured.

His eyes were clear.

He asked fewer questions.

At length he said,

"Master, I have learned more this day from silence than from many words."

And I answered,

"Blessed art thou."

"For words may point toward Wisdom."

"But silence prepareth the soul to receive her."

Know therefore, O seeker, that every man must build within himself a secret cave.

No enemy may enter there unless thou invitest him.

No multitude may disturb it unless thou openest the gate.

No praise can inflate it.

No insult can diminish it.

There the Nameless Light speaketh without sound.

There the weary soul remembereth its first simplicity.

There fear looseth its hold.

There pride findeth no throne.

There the heart becometh transparent as clear glass before the morning sun.

Therefore enter often into thy secret cave.

Though thou dwellest in a great city, neglect it not.

Though thy hands labour among many people, preserve it undefiled.

For he who keepeth the Cave of Silence within himself shall carry peace into every place where his feet shall tread.

Here endeth the thirteenth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter XIV — Of Fasting from the Noise of the World

And on the first day of the new moon, the disciple said unto me,

"Master, men fast from bread and from wine, and many count this a righteous thing. Yet thou hast spoken often of another fasting. Declare unto me this mystery."

Then I answered him, saying,

"There is a hunger of the body, and there is a hunger of the soul."

"The first is satisfied by bread."

"The second is often hidden beneath continual noise."

Then I took a vessel and filled it from the spring until the water became still.

I cast therein a small stone.

Immediately the surface was troubled, and the image of the heavens disappeared.

Then I waited.

The ripples ceased.

The water became as polished glass.

Again the heavens were reflected.

Then said I,

"Thus is the soul."

"When it is continually disturbed by every fear, every rumor, every desire, and every contention, it cannot clearly behold the Light."

"But when it learneth stillness, that which hath always been present is perceived."

The disciple asked,

"What then is this fast?"

And I said,

"It is to abstain for a season from that which feedeth confusion."

"Fast from needless arguments."

"Fast from vain praise."

"Fast from idle curiosity."

"Fast from the desire to know every whisper carried upon the wind."

"Fast from comparing thyself unto thy neighbour."

"For many fill their minds as gluttons fill their bellies, and afterward wonder why they possess no peace."

Then I led him unto an ancient cedar that had stood upon the mountain longer than the memory of men.

Its roots were deep.

Its branches stretched toward heaven.

Storms had beaten upon it many times.

Yet it remained steadfast.

"What preserveth this tree?" I asked.

"The depth of its roots," answered the disciple.

"So likewise," said I,

"The soul that sinketh its roots into silence is not easily overthrown by the tempests of the world."

"But the soul whose roots lie only upon the surface is carried away by every wind."

Then the disciple was silent.

For he remembered the many seasons in which his own thoughts had been driven hither and thither by every passing opinion.

And I perceived that understanding had entered quietly into him.

Therefore I said,

"Keep one hour each day wherein no unnecessary voice entereth."

"Keep one day each season wherein thy soul returneth unto simplicity."

"Walk among the trees."

"Sit beside living waters."

"Labour with thine hands."

"Lift up thine eyes unto the stars."

"For creation speaketh without contention."

"And the Nameless Light is often perceived more clearly where few words are spoken."

The disciple then asked,

"Master, shall I forsake the world altogether?"

I answered,

"Nay."

"Thou shalt return unto men when Wisdom sendeth thee."

"But go not as one hungry for their applause."

"Go as the spring that seeketh not to be praised, yet quencheth the thirst of all who drink."

Then the evening shadows covered the mountain.

The cedar stood unmoved.

The spring continued its quiet song.

And we gave thanks without speaking.

For gratitude hath a language that no tongue can utter.

Here endeth the fourteenth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter XV — The Prayer That Hath No Words

And when many days had passed in quietness, the disciple came unto me before the rising of the sun.

His countenance was peaceful, yet there remained within his eyes a question that sought utterance.

And he said,

"Master, from my youth have I learned many prayers.

Some are long.

Some are short.

Some are spoken in the assemblies of men.

Others are whispered in secret.

Yet thou hast oftentimes remained many hours in silence.

Tell me therefore, what prayer offerest thou unto the Nameless One?"

Then I looked toward the eastern hills, where the first light touched the summits of the mountains.

Long remained I silent.

At length I answered,

"The deepest prayer is born where words come to an end."

The disciple marvelled.

Then said I,

"Words are as vessels.

They bear the water.

Yet the vessel is not the water."

"So likewise are prayers of the tongue good and profitable when they arise from sincerity.

But there cometh a season when the soul desireth not to speak concerning the Light.

It desireth only to abide within it."

Then I stretched forth my hand toward the spring that flowed beside the cave.

"Tell me, doth the spring proclaim continually that it giveth water?"

"Nay," answered the disciple.

"It floweth."

"And doth the sun declare each morning that it giveth light?"

"Nay."

"It shineth."

"So also the awakened soul."

"It ceaseth striving to appear holy.

It simply abideth in that which is good."

Then we entered into the Cave of Silence.

Neither incense was burned.

Neither chant was sung.

Neither petition was spoken.

Only the quiet breathing of life filled the chamber.

After a long season the disciple opened his eyes, and tears were upon his face.

He said,

"Master, I know not what hath befallen me.

No voice spake.

No vision appeared.

Yet my heart hath become lighter."

Then answered I,

"The physician healeth not always by loud command.

Sometimes healing cometh by rest."

"So also doth the Nameless Light visit the humble soul."

"Not always with signs.

Not always with wonders.

But often as gentle peace."

Then I wrote these sayings upon a smooth stone:

The proud man prayeth that Heaven should hear him.

The humble man learneth first to hear Heaven.

The restless seek many words.

The peaceful become the prayer.

The disciple read them many times.

Then he asked,

"Master, what shall I ask when I pray?"

And I answered,

"If thou desirest wisdom, ask for humility.

If thou desirest strength, ask for compassion.

If thou desirest understanding, ask for patience.

And if thou knowest not what to ask, remain quietly before the Nameless Light.

For sincere silence is itself a prayer."

Thereafter we departed from the cave.

The birds had begun their morning song.

The wind moved softly among the cedars.

The whole creation seemed to offer thanksgiving without speech.

Then understood the disciple that every living thing praised the Nameless One according to its own nature.

The river by flowing.

The cedar by standing.

The eagle by soaring.

The stars by shining.

And man, when he is made whole, by simply becoming what he was created to be.

Here endeth the fifteenth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter XVI — Of the Watching Mind

And when the disciple had dwelt with me through many seasons, he said,

"Master, thou hast taught me silence, prayer, and the hidden alchemy of the soul. Yet I perceive that even after long discipline, wandering thoughts return as birds unto the field. Shall this warfare never cease?"

Then answered I,

"Hast thou observed the shepherd upon the hillside?"

He replied,

"I have."

I said,

"Doth the shepherd sleep because his flock hath become quiet?"

"Nay."

"He keepeth watch."

"And why?"

"Lest the wolf enter among the sheep."

Then I said,

"So likewise must the wise man keep watch over his own mind."

"For the thoughts that trouble thee do not always come with shouting."

"Some enter softly."

"They wear the garments of virtue."

"They speak the language of righteousness."

"Yet beneath their cloak they nourish pride."

The disciple was astonished.

"Can pride wear the face of holiness?"

I answered,

"More often than the face of wickedness."

"For the robber knoweth he is a robber."

"But the proud man often imagineth himself humble."

"Therefore the last enemy is not always anger, nor greed, nor fear."

"It is the secret delight in believing thyself to have conquered them."

Then I brought forth an old bronze mirror, clouded by many years.

I breathed upon it.

Its surface became dim.

Then I wiped it clean with a linen cloth.

Immediately it reflected the morning light.

"What seest thou?" I asked.

"A clear reflection."

"And what obscured it?"

"A little breath."

"Even so," said I,

"The mind needeth continual cleansing."

"Not because it is evil."

"But because dust setteth upon it every day."

"The wise therefore examine themselves daily."

"They confess quickly."

"They forgive quickly."

"They begin again quickly."

Then I wrote upon the wall of the cave these seven watchwords:

Guard thy thoughts.

Measure thy words.

Simplify thy desires.

Forgive thy neighbour.

Receive correction gladly.

Remain teachable.

Return unto silence.

And I said unto the disciple,

"If thou rememberest these seven, they shall preserve thee in times of abundance and in times of want."

"They shall guide thee when praised."

"They shall strengthen thee when reviled."

"They shall comfort thee when alone."

"They shall humble thee when honoured."

Then the disciple asked one final question.

"Master, when shall I know that the Great Work is complete?"

I looked toward the western sky, where the sun descended beyond the mountains.

Long did I remain silent.

Then I answered,

"When thou no longer askest whether it is complete."

"For the tree beareth fruit without counting its branches."

"The spring giveth water without measuring its streams."

"The sun shineth without seeking witnesses."

"So also the perfected soul."

"It seeketh not perfection."

"It simply walketh in humility."

Then the evening star appeared.

The fire upon the hearth grew still.

The mountain rested beneath the heavens.

And I knew that the time of my departure drew nigh.

Yet I feared it not.

For the cave had taught me silence.

The furnace had taught me patience.

The spring had taught me simplicity.

And the Nameless Light had taught me that nothing true is ever lost.

Therefore I left these writings for those who should come after me.

Not that they should imitate my solitude.

But that they should discover within themselves the hidden cave, the living spring, the inward furnace, and the Light that no darkness can overcome.

Peace be unto every seeker who readeth these words with humility.

Here endeth the sixteenth instruction of the Hidden Sage, and the Fourth Book is fulfilled.

Book V — Of the Secret Kingdom

Chapter XVII — The Pearl Hidden in Dust

And it came to pass, when my days upon the mountain were nearly fulfilled, that the disciple sat beside me beneath an ancient olive tree.

The evening was calm.

The wind moved softly over the hills.

Neither of us spake for a long season.

Then the disciple said,

"Master, after all these years I have sought the Hidden Kingdom. I have searched the mountains, studied the books of the ancients, watched beside the furnace, and entered often into the Cave of Silence. Tell me now, where is the Kingdom of which thou hast spoken from the beginning?"

Then I smiled, and stooped unto the earth.

Taking up a little handful of dust, I opened my hand before him.

Among the dust there lay a small pearl of exceeding brightness.

And I said,

"What seest thou?"

He answered,

"A pearl hidden among the dust."

Then said I,

"And hadst thou looked only upon the dust, thou wouldest have passed it by."

Even so is the Hidden Kingdom.

Many behold only the dust of the world.

Few seek the Pearl.

The dust is the noise of ambition.

The dust is the fear of men.

The dust is the praise of the multitude.

The dust is the love of possessions.

The dust is the endless striving after shadows.

But the Pearl abideth quietly.

It contendeth with no man.

It proclaimeth not itself in the streets.

It waiteth patiently for the eye that hath learned to see.

Then the disciple asked,

"Master, who hath hidden the Pearl?"

I answered,

"No hand hath hidden it.

Only the hurried eye passeth over it."

For the Hidden Kingdom is not concealed by distance, but by distraction.

It is nearer than thy breath.

Yet farther than the proud can travel.

It is simpler than a child.

Yet more difficult than the learning of many books.

For the learned man often seeketh to possess Wisdom.

The humble desire only to receive her.

Then I placed the pearl within the disciple's hand.

He closed his fingers tightly around it.

And I said,

"Open thy hand."

He obeyed.

Then I asked,

"Was the pearl made more precious because thou didst grasp it?"

He answered,

"Nay."

"Neither is the Hidden Kingdom possessed by grasping."

"The closed hand holdeth little."

"The open hand receiveth all that is given."

Then I cast the pearl once more among the dust.

The disciple sought diligently until he found it again.

And I said,

"So must every seeker search."

Not because the Light delighteth in hiding.

But because the searching changeth the seeker.

Every act of humility removeth a little dust.

Every act of compassion revealeth more of the Pearl.

Every hour spent in silence cleanseth the eye.

Every relinquished vanity uncovereth another portion of the Hidden Kingdom.

Then the disciple wept quietly.

For he perceived that he had long sought afar what had patiently awaited him within.

And I laid my hand upon his shoulder, saying,

"Blessed art thou, for thou hast ceased seeking greatness and hast begun seeking simplicity.

The Pearl hath never departed from thee.

Only the dust hath begun to settle."

The sun descended beyond the western mountains.

The pearl rested quietly in the disciple's hand.

And the whole earth seemed filled with a gentle light that no eye alone could behold.

Here endeth the seventeenth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter XVIII — The River of Living Light

And on the morning following, I arose before the first light, and called unto the disciple, saying,

"Come, and I shall show thee the oldest teacher upon the earth."

Then we departed from the cave and descended through the valleys until we came unto the great river, whose waters had flowed since generations beyond remembrance.

Its voice was gentle.

Its course was constant.

Its surface reflected both the darkness of the night and the brightness of the morning.

Then I said unto the disciple,

"Sit beside the river, and behold."

Long did we remain there.

Neither of us spake.

At length I asked,

"What hast thou learned?"

The disciple answered,

"I have learned nothing."

Then I smiled.

"Remain."

Again we sat until the sun stood high above us.

The disciple looked upon the flowing waters without ceasing.

At last he said,

"Master, the river is never the same.

Yet it remaineth the river."

Then rejoiced I, saying,

"Now hast thou begun to read the second page of the Book of Nature."

For every drop passeth away.

Yet the river endureth.

Every wave ariseth.

Every wave falleth.

Yet the current ceaseth not.

Even so are the thoughts of man.

One cometh.

Another departeth.

Joy ariseth.

Sorrow followeth.

Fear visiteth.

Peace returneth.

But beneath them all there remaineth a deeper current, quiet and untroubled.

Then I took a branch from the bank and cast it into the stream.

It resisted the water.

It turned upon itself.

It struck against the stones.

It was delayed by many obstacles.

After a time it yielded unto the current.

Then it moved peacefully.

"What hast thou seen?" I asked.

The disciple answered,

"The branch suffered while it resisted."

"So likewise," said I,

"The soul suffereth greatly when it contendeth continually against that which cannot be changed."

"There is a yielding born of cowardice."

"And there is a yielding born of Wisdom."

"The first surrendereth truth."

"The second surrendereth pride."

Learn therefore to discern between them.

For the willow bendeth before the storm and liveth.

The dead branch remaineth rigid and is broken.

The Nameless Light hath not made thee to be stone, but living spirit.

Therefore become gentle without becoming weak.

Become steadfast without becoming hard.

Become humble without becoming fearful.

The river receiveth every stream.

It refuseth none.

The clear waters.

The muddy waters.

The waters from the mountains.

The waters from the valleys.

Yet after many miles they become one river.

Then said the disciple,

"Master, is this the meaning of compassion?"

I answered,

"Thou hast spoken well."

For compassion rejecteth not the broken.

Neither doth it delight in their brokenness.

It receiveth.

It cleanseth.

It restoreth.

Even as the river carrieth away much that falleth into it, yet remaineth pure through continual flowing.

Then we walked farther upstream until we came unto the place where the waters first sprang forth from the living rock.

The spring was small.

A child might easily have stepped across it.

Yet from that little spring proceeded the mighty river.

Then said I,

"Despise not small beginnings."

"No great river was born great."

"No mighty cedar began as a giant."

"No sage was born full of wisdom."

"The Hidden Kingdom increaseth quietly."

"The seed knoweth not the greatness of the tree that sleepeth within it."

Then the disciple drank from the spring.

Its water was cool and clear.

And I said unto him,

"So drink daily from the hidden spring of silence."

"Go not always unto the river after it hath become troubled by many travellers."

"Return often unto the source."

"For there the water remaineth pure."

As the sun began to descend, we climbed again toward the cave.

Neither the disciple nor I carried away any water.

For the river had already entered into our hearts.

And I wrote these words before we departed:

**He that seeketh only the river shall one day lose it.

He that seeketh the Spring shall never thirst.**

Here endeth the eighteenth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter XIX — The Marriage of Wisdom and Silence

And it came to pass, after many years had gone by, that the disciple perceived the hairs of my head had become white as the snows upon the highest peaks.

Then he knew that the days of my pilgrimage drew toward their evening.

Yet sorrow entered not into his countenance.

For he had learned that all things under Heaven have their season.

One evening, as the stars appeared one by one in the firmament, he asked me,

"Master, thou hast often spoken unto me of Wisdom, and thou hast taught me the blessedness of Silence. Tell me now, why dost thou always join them together, as though they were husband and wife?"

Then I answered him,

"Because neither is made perfect without the other."

"For Wisdom without Silence becometh pride."

"And Silence without Wisdom becometh emptiness."

"They are as two wings of one bird."

"If either be broken, the soul cannot ascend."

Then I gathered two pieces of wood.

One was dry and seasoned.

The other was green and full of sap.

I placed them together upon the hearth.

The green wood smoked greatly and gave little warmth.

The dry wood burned brightly, and by its flame the green wood also was kindled.

Then said I,

"So is the soul."

"Wisdom kindleth Silence."

"And Silence preserveth the flame of Wisdom."

"Separate them, and both are diminished."

Then the disciple asked,

"How shall I know whether I possess true Wisdom?"

I replied,

"By the fruit it beareth."

"If thy knowledge maketh thee impatient, it is not yet Wisdom."

"If thy understanding leadeth thee to despise the simple, it is not yet Wisdom."

"If thy learning increaseth thy hunger for praise, it is not yet Wisdom."

"But if thy knowledge maketh thee gentle..."

"If thy understanding increaseth thy compassion..."

"If thy learning teacheth thee to listen more than to speak..."

"Then Wisdom hath begun to make her dwelling within thee."

Thereupon we walked beneath the heavens.

The moon shone upon the valley.

The stars kept their appointed courses.

Neither strove with the other.

Neither sought the place of another.

Each fulfilled its calling in quiet faithfulness.

Then I said,

"Look upon the heavens."

"The greatest lights make the least noise."

"The sun proclaimeth not its rising."

"The moon seeketh no applause."

"The stars publish not their own beauty."

"Yet by their constancy the whole earth is guided."

"So let thy life become."

"Speak when speech bringeth healing."

"Remain silent when silence nourisheth peace."

"Teach without seeking disciples."

"Give without counting thy gifts."

"Love without measuring thy reward."

Then the disciple remained thoughtful.

After a long while he asked,

"Master, what is the highest wisdom?"

I looked upon him with gladness and said,

"To know that every gift is received."

"To rejoice without possessing."

"To serve without ruling."

"To forgive without remembering."

"To love without demanding."

"To become transparent, that the Light may pass through thee unhindered."

Then I took from within the cave an ancient lamp of clay.

Its oil was nearly spent.

Its flame was small, yet steadfast.

I placed it before the disciple.

"Observe this lamp."

"It doth not strive to become the sun."

"It is content to illumine the little place entrusted unto it."

"So likewise, seek not greatness."

"Be faithful in the measure that is given thee."

"For many desire to enlighten the nations while neglecting the darkness within their own dwelling."

The disciple bowed his head.

Not in shame, but in gratitude.

For he perceived that Wisdom was not a treasure to be possessed, but a companion to be walked with.

And Silence was not the absence of sound, but the chamber wherein Wisdom found her rest.

The night grew deep.

The lamp burned quietly.

The wind passed gently before the entrance of the cave.

And all things seemed to dwell together in peaceful harmony.

Then I knew that the disciple had become no longer merely a hearer of these sayings, but a living witness unto them.

Here endeth the nineteenth instruction of the Hidden Sage.

Chapter XX — The Return unto the Nameless Light

And it came to pass, when many winters had covered the mountain with snow and many springs had clothed it again with flowers, that I perceived the hour of my departure was at hand.

The strength of my hands had diminished.

My steps had become slow.

Yet the inward spring failed not.

The Hidden Fire burned with a quiet flame.

The disciple ministered unto me with tenderness, speaking little, for he had learned that love needeth not many words.

One evening, as the setting sun clothed the heavens in gold and crimson, I called him unto my side.

He knelt beside me, and I said,

"My son, every river returneth unto the sea.

Every seed returneth unto the earth.

Every flame yieldeth itself unto the unseen.

So also every faithful soul returneth unto the Nameless Light from which all goodness proceedeth."

The disciple answered,

"Master, I fear thy departure."

Then I laid my hand upon his head and said,

"Fear not the setting of the sun."

"Dost thou mourn each evening because the light withdraweth from thine eyes?"

"Nay, for thou knowest the dawn shall come."

"So likewise learn to behold death."

"Not as the triumph of darkness, but as the completion of the journey."

"For that which is born passeth away."

"But that which hath been united unto Truth cannot be stolen by time."

Then he asked,

"What shall become of these writings?"

I answered,

"If they perish, let them perish."

"If they endure, let them endure."

"For Truth is not preserved by parchment alone."

"It is written most deeply upon the heart that hath become humble."

"Better one soul transformed than a thousand libraries admired and forgotten."

Then I bade him bring forth the old lamp that had burned beside us through many seasons.

Its clay was cracked.

Its oil was nearly spent.

I took it into my hands.

"Behold this lamp."

"It hath given light according to its measure."

"It hath not envied the stars."

"It hath not rivaled the sun."

"It hath simply fulfilled its purpose."

"Thus should every life be lived."

The disciple wept.

Yet I said unto him,

"Let thy tears water compassion, not despair."

"For grief and gratitude drink from the same spring."

When the first stars appeared, we went together unto the mouth of the cave.

The heavens stretched beyond all reckoning.

The mountains stood in solemn silence.

The wind moved gently through the cedars.

The river below continued its ancient song.

I said,

"All these have been my teachers."

"The mountain taught steadfastness."

"The river taught surrender."

"The spring taught purity."

"The cedar taught patience."

"The stars taught wonder."

"The cave taught silence."

"And the Nameless Light taught that every true gift is received, never possessed."

Then I turned unto the disciple one final time.

"Seek not another master."

"Seek Truth."

"Build not monuments unto my memory."

"Build within thyself the Cave of Glass."

"Keep the furnace burning with humility."

"Wash often in the living spring."

"Watch over thy thoughts."

"Love thy neighbour without seeking thy reward."

"Forgive quickly."

"Receive correction gladly."

"And when thou knowest not the way, return unto Silence."

For Silence shall become unto thee a faithful companion.

Wisdom shall walk beside thee.

Compassion shall strengthen thy hands.

Humility shall preserve thy feet from stumbling.

And the Hidden Kingdom shall reveal itself anew with every act of selfless love.

Then the disciple bowed himself unto the earth.

He desired to speak, yet no words came.

For there are moments when speech would lessen what the heart already knoweth.

The night became very still.

The lamp beside us gave its last quiet flame.

Then, as the dawn's first light touched the eastern mountains, I closed mine eyes.

Not in fear.

Not in sorrow.

But in peace.

For I knew that I returned not unto emptiness, but unto the Nameless Light, from whom every ray of truth, every motion of compassion, every whisper of wisdom, and every breath of life had ever proceeded.

The disciple remained beside me until the sun stood high.

Then he carried these writings into the Cave of Glass and placed them within a vessel of cedar wood.

Upon the lid he inscribed only these words:

> **Seek not the author.**
> **Seek the Light.**

And he sealed the vessel, not that the words should be hidden forever, but that they might await those who would seek them with humble hearts.

Thus endeth *The Hidden Book of the Cave of Glass*.

May all who read these sayings become lovers of Wisdom, friends of Silence, servants of Compassion, and faithful pilgrims of the Nameless Light.

Peace be unto all who seek with sincerity.

Finis.

Appendix I — The Forty Sayings of the Hidden Sage

These are the sayings remembered by the disciple after the departure of the Hidden Sage. They were spoken at many

times throughout his pilgrimage and gathered together that future seekers might ponder them with humility.

1. Seek not to appear wise; seek to become gentle.
2. The loudest voice is seldom the clearest.
3. Every soul buildeth a house within itself; let thine be spacious enough for compassion.
4. Pride closeth the hand; humility openeth it.
5. Wisdom entereth quietly and departeth from noisy hearts.
6. The greatest victories are unseen by the world.
7. Silence is not the absence of sound, but the presence of attention.
8. Judge no man's journey while thou art still walking thine own.
9. Every act of forgiveness looseneth another chain.
10. The impatient seek answers; the humble learn to ask better questions.
11. A thankful heart possesseth riches that thieves cannot steal.
12. Better a little light faithfully tended than a great fire kindled by vanity.
13. Return often to the hidden spring.
14. The tree beareth fruit because it remaineth rooted.
15. The mountain conquereth by remaining still.
16. The river overcometh by continual flowing.
17. Speak only when thy words are kinder than silence.
18. Receive correction as rain upon thirsty ground.
19. He who cannot listen cannot truly teach.
20. The cave within is larger than the palace without.
21. Possessions are useful servants but cruel masters.

22. Compassion seeth farther than judgment.
23. The Nameless Light needeth no defender.
24. He who seeketh applause hath already accepted a poor reward.
25. Every morning is another beginning of the Great Work.
26. Truth feareth no honest question.
27. Learn from children, for they have forgotten many burdens.
28. Humility is the garment of enduring wisdom.
29. Anger speaketh quickly; understanding waiteth.
30. Let thy peace be stronger than another's turmoil.
31. The purest mirror is the one that forgetteth itself.
32. There is no wasted act of kindness.
33. To love without possessing is true freedom.
34. The hidden kingdom increaseth wherever mercy is shown.
35. Keep thy heart softer than thy opinions.
36. Become a lamp rather than a trumpet.
37. Walk lightly upon the earth, for thou art a guest.
38. Wonder is the beginning of every true philosophy.
39. Return always unto Silence, and Silence shall return thee unto Wisdom.
40. Seek not the Sage; seek the Light that made the Sage wise.

Appendix II — The Seven Operations of the Spiritual Alchemist

These are the Seven Operations as taught by the Hidden Sage. Let no man suppose that they concern the changing of metals or the making of earthly treasure. Their work is the transformation of the heart, the illumination of the mind, and the purification of the spirit.

The Great Work is accomplished not by force, but by continual faithfulness in small things.

The First Operation — Calcination

The Hidden Sage said,

"As fire consumeth the dry branch, so must the fire of truth consume pride."

Every seeker entereth the Furnace.

Affliction revealeth what prosperity concealeth.

Criticism revealeth hidden vanity.

Failure revealeth secret ambition.

Delay revealeth impatience.

Therefore flee not the Furnace.

For that which is false is burned away, while that which is true endureth.

Blessed is the soul that alloweth pride to become ash.

For from humble ashes new life ariseth.

The Second Operation — Dissolution

The Sage taught,

"The stone that refuseth the river remaineth rough."

The heart hardened by resentment cannot receive Wisdom.

Therefore dissolve bitterness by forgiveness.

Dissolve fear by trust.

Dissolve hatred by compassion.

Even as snow melteth beneath the warmth of spring, so let the frozen places of thy soul be softened by mercy.

The river resisteth none.

Learn therefore from the river.

The Third Operation — Separation

Many things dwell together within the heart.

Some nourish life.

Others diminish it.

Therefore examine thyself with honesty.

Separate desire from necessity.

Separate conviction from stubbornness.

Separate humility from false modesty.

Separate silence from indifference.

Separate compassion from weakness.

The wise physician distinguisheth before he healeth.

So likewise must the seeker learn holy discernment.

The Fourth Operation — Conjunction

When the soul hath been purified, let not its virtues remain divided.

Join understanding unto compassion.

Join courage unto gentleness.

Join truth unto mercy.

Join knowledge unto humility.

Join silence unto joyful service.

The Hidden Sage declared,

"A divided house shaketh.

A united heart endureth."

Thus the virtues become one harmonious life.

The Fifth Operation — Fermentation

The disciple once asked,

"Master, why doth joy return after long sorrow?"

The Sage answered,

"Because every winter secretly prepareth the spring."

There cometh a season when the soul discovereth a quiet gladness that dependeth not upon outward fortune.

This is the hidden wine.

It intoxicates not the body.

It maketh sober the mind.

It strengtheneth weary hands.

It giveth thanks amidst hardship.

Guard this joy carefully.

For it is among the rarest gifts of the Great Work.

The Sixth Operation — Distillation

As water ascendeth in vapor and returneth purified, so must the seeker return often unto Silence.

Each day cleanse thy thoughts.

Each evening forgive.

Each morning begin again.

Let every trial become instruction.

Let every success become gratitude.

Let every sorrow become compassion.

Thus the soul groweth clearer with every passing season.

The Hidden Sage said,

"The purest mirror is not made clean once, but continually."

The Seventh Operation — Coagulation

When all these operations have quietly wrought their work, the virtues become no longer practices but nature.

Humility becometh spontaneous.

Compassion becometh effortless.

Patience becometh steadfast.

Wisdom becometh gentle.

Silence becometh joyful.

The Great Work is not completed when a man performeth holy deeds.

It is completed when holiness becometh the natural movement of his life.

Yet beware.

Whosoever declareth, "The Great Work is finished," hath already forgotten its first lesson.

Remain therefore a perpetual student.

Remain teachable.

Remain grateful.

Remain small before the Infinite.

The Final Exhortation

Then said the Hidden Sage unto the disciple,

"These Seven Operations shall not be perfected in one day, nor in one year.

The mountain is climbed one faithful step at a time.

If thou fallest, arise.

If thou growest weary, rest.

If thou becomest confused, return unto Silence.

If thou findest Wisdom, clothe her in humility.

For the Great Work endureth throughout thy pilgrimage, and every act of sincere love revealeth another spark of the Nameless Light."

Thus end the Seven Operations of the Spiritual Alchemist, preserved by the disciple for those who seek not earthly gold, but the hidden treasure of the awakened heart.

Appendix III — The Prayer of the Cave

This prayer was remembered by the disciple and spoken at the beginning and ending of each day. It was not recited as a magical formula, but as a quiet disposition of the heart before the Nameless Light.

At the Rising of the Sun

O Nameless Light,

Source of every good gift,

Breath beyond every breath,

Silence deeper than all words,

Awaken my heart unto truth.

Cleanse my thoughts of pride.

Free my hands from selfishness.

Open mine eyes unto wonder.

Grant that I may walk gently upon the earth,

Receive correction with gratitude,

Speak with compassion,

Listen with patience,

And love without seeking reward.

Let me become a clear vessel,

That Thy Light may shine through me

For the comfort of all living beings.

Teach me to seek not greatness,

But faithfulness.

Not applause,

But sincerity.

Not dominion,

But service.

May every step this day

Lead me nearer unto Wisdom,

Nearer unto Humility,

Nearer unto Peace.

Amen.

At the Setting of the Sun

O Hidden Light,

I give thanks for every mercy,

Whether seen or unseen.

Forgive the pride I have nourished.

Heal the wounds I have caused.

Strengthen the good that hath begun.

Receive my joys without vanity,

My sorrows without despair,

My labours without boasting,

And my rest without sloth.

If I have spoken rashly,

Teach me gentleness.

If I have judged unfairly,

Teach me mercy.

If I have forgotten Thee amid the noise of the world,

Lead me again unto the hidden spring.

As the stars quietly appear above the mountains,

So let Wisdom quietly arise within my soul.

As the river ceaseth not from its flowing,

So let compassion never cease within me.

As the cedar remaineth steadfast through every season,

So establish my heart in patience.

And if this night should be my last,

Grant that I may return in peace,

Trusting not in my own works,

But in the inexhaustible goodness

Of the Nameless Light.

Amen.

The Prayer of Silence

When no words arise, pray thus:

Sit quietly.

Breathe with gratitude.

Attend without striving.

Receive without grasping.

Release without fear.

Remain in humility.

Love without condition.

Rest in the Nameless Light.

For there are prayers that ascend by words,

And there are prayers that ascend by stillness.

The Hidden Sage taught that both are good,

Yet the deepest prayer is the life transformed by compassion.

The Blessing of the Pilgrim

May thy feet remain upon the path of humility.

May thy hands become instruments of mercy.

May thy tongue speak truth seasoned with kindness.

May thy mind dwell in attentive stillness.

May thy heart become a sanctuary of peace.

May thy dwelling, whether cave or cottage,

Palace or humble shelter,

Become a place where Wisdom is welcomed,

Compassion is practiced,

And Silence is cherished.

May the Hidden Kingdom unfold within thee,

Little by little,

As the dawn unfolds across the mountains.

And when thy pilgrimage is complete,

May thou return without fear

Unto the Nameless Light,

From whom every good thing proceedeth,

And unto whom every faithful heart findeth its rest.

Peace be with thee,

Now and unto the end of thy journey.

Amen.

Appendix IV — A Glossary of Sacred Symbols

These are the principal symbols employed throughout the teachings of the Hidden Sage. They are not to be understood as rigid definitions, for every true symbol revealeth more than

words alone can express. Let the reader ponder them patiently, and their meaning shall unfold with time.

The Nameless Light

The eternal Source of all truth, goodness, wisdom, beauty, and life.

It is called Nameless not because it cannot be spoken of, but because no single name can contain its fullness. Every worthy name pointeth toward it; none exhaust it.

The Cave of Glass

The inward sanctuary of contemplation.

It is the quiet chamber of the heart wherein a person beholdeth oneself honestly, without deception, and becometh transparent before the Light.

The Hidden Kingdom

The reign of wisdom, compassion, and humility within the soul.

It is not discovered by conquest, but by continual transformation.

The Furnace

Every trial that revealeth what already dwelleth within.

Affliction is not itself the teacher; rather, it uncovereth those places where learning is yet needed.

The Living Spring

The continual renewal found in silence, prayer, reflection, and sincere repentance.

Whosoever returneth often unto the Spring doth not remain long in spiritual dryness.

The River

The flowing movement of life itself.

It teacheth adaptability, perseverance, compassion, and trust.

As no water remaineth the same, so every moment inviteth fresh understanding.

The Pearl

The hidden treasure of wisdom already present beneath the dust of distraction.

The Pearl is not created by the seeker.

It is discovered.

The Dust

Every attachment that obscures clear vision.

Pride.

Vanity.

Greed.

Fear.

Endless distraction.

The Dust doth not destroy the Pearl, but concealeth it.

The Cedar

Steadfastness.

Patience.

Faithfulness through many seasons.

Deep roots nourish quiet strength.

The Mountain

The long pilgrimage toward maturity.

Its ascent requireth perseverance rather than haste.

The Lamp

The measure of light entrusted unto each soul.

No lamp need become the sun.

Faithfulness in little things illuminateth more than ambition.

The Mirror

Self-knowledge.

When clouded by pride it distorteth.

When cleansed by humility it reflecteth truly.

The Seven Operations

The symbolic path of inward transformation:

Calcination — Humbling pride.

Dissolution — Softening the hardened heart.

Separation — Exercising discernment.

Conjunction — Uniting the virtues.

Fermentation — Discovering quiet joy.

Distillation — Continual purification.

Coagulation — The embodiment of wisdom.

The Great Work

The lifelong transformation of the whole person.

Its completion is not perfection without flaw, but increasing conformity unto wisdom, compassion, humility, and truth.

The Hidden Fire

The inward desire for Truth.

It burneth without destroying.

It warmeth without consuming.

It purifieth without cruelty.

Silence

Not merely the absence of speech.

It is attentive presence.

The stillness wherein Wisdom is heard.

The chamber wherein compassion is strengthened.

Wisdom

The harmonious union of truth, humility, discernment, and love.

Knowledge gathereth facts.

Wisdom ordereth life.

Compassion

The willing sharing in another's burden.

It neither condemneth nor indulgeth.

It seeketh healing.

Humility

Truthfulness concerning oneself.

Neither self-exaltation nor self-contempt.

The clear recognition that every good gift is received.

The Pilgrimage

The whole course of earthly life.

Each day is another step.

Each trial another teacher.

Each kindness another mile toward the Hidden Kingdom.

The Disciple

Every sincere seeker.

His questions are the reader's questions.

His journey is the reader's invitation.

The Hidden Sage

Not merely one man dwelling in a cave,

But every faithful teacher who pointeth beyond himself unto the Nameless Light.

For the Sage desired no followers.

He desired only that all who came after him should become lovers of Wisdom, friends of Silence, servants of Compassion, and pilgrims of the Hidden Kingdom.

Thus end the Sacred Symbols preserved by the disciple.

Afterword — The Last Testimony of the Disciple

I, whose name hath not been written, set down these final words after the departure of the Hidden Sage.

Many who shall find this manuscript may inquire,

"Who was he?"

"From what nation did he come?"

"Under what king did he live?"

"What was his true name?"

Unto such questions I have no answer that would profit the soul.

For he taught me that curiosity often seeketh what wisdom leaveth veiled.

His life was hidden.

So also let his memory remain.

For if thou admire only the man, thou mayest neglect the path upon which he walked.

When first I found him, I was rich in questions and poor in understanding.

I desired mysteries.

He taught me simplicity.

I desired certainty.

He taught me patience.

I desired greatness.

He taught me service.

I desired to conquer the world.

He taught me first to govern my own heart.

Many suppose that wisdom consisteth in possessing rare knowledge.

Yet the Hidden Sage possessed little.

His dwelling was a cave.

His table was a stone.

His lamp was fashioned of humble clay.

His garments were plain.

His speech was measured.

Nevertheless, kings might have envied his peace.

The years I spent beside him were not filled with wonders such as men delight to recount.

No mountains were moved.

No stars fell from Heaven.

No hidden treasure of silver or gold was discovered.

Yet every sunrise became a teacher.

Every river became a sermon.

Every season became a page in the Book of Nature.

Every silence became an invitation unto the Nameless Light.

Thus I learned that the greatest marvels are often the quietest.

When at last he departed, I desired to build a monument upon the mountain.

But I remembered his words:

"Build not monuments unto my memory.

Build within thyself the Cave of Glass."

Therefore no stone marketh the place of his rest.

The mountain knoweth.

The cedars know.

The river remembereth.

That is enough.

These writings I have preserved, not because they are beyond error, nor because they contain all wisdom, but because they directed one wandering soul toward humility, compassion, and peace.

Should they do the same for another, they have fulfilled their purpose.

Should they be forgotten, yet their spirit live on in acts of kindness, then nothing precious hath been lost.

Therefore, O reader, if thou hast journeyed with us from the first page unto this last, receive not these words as a chain but as a lantern.

Carry them only so long as they help thee to walk faithfully.

If ever thou findest a brighter light, rejoice and follow it without fear.

For Truth is not diminished when it is more clearly seen.

Remember always the teachings of the Hidden Sage:

Seek Wisdom more than knowledge.

Seek Compassion more than victory.

Seek Humility more than honor.

Seek Silence more than applause.

Seek the Light more than the lamp that beareth it.

And if, in years to come, thou shouldst dwell among many people or in solitude, amid prosperity or poverty, in youth or in old age, forget not the little practices by which the Great Work is accomplished.

Pause before speaking.

Listen before judging.

Forgive before resentment taketh root.

Give thanks before asking for more.

Return often unto Silence.

For there the hidden spring still floweth.

There the furnace burneth without consuming.

There the Pearl shineth beneath the dust.

There the Hidden Kingdom draweth near.

There the Nameless Light awaiteth every sincere seeker.

I now lay aside my reed and close this manuscript.

May the One who is beyond every worthy name guide thy steps in truth.

May thy heart remain gentle.

May thy hands be swift unto mercy.

May thy life become a quiet blessing unto all whose paths cross thine own.

Peace be with thee, fellow pilgrim.

Go now, and walk in the Light.

Here endeth the testimony of the disciple, and with it the whole of *The Hidden Book of the Cave of Glass*.